

September 24, 1978

Director for the Central Intelligence
Agency,
c/o Office of the Director
Washington, D.C. 20505

Dear Director:

For the passed 20 years I have collected
official items, on Presidents, the largest section
started in 1957-1958, deals with late Pres. Kennedy
and his family. I have gone into very great detail
on the assassinations of late Pres. Kennedy, and Sen.
Robert Kennedy. In this section from 1963 - the
Warren Report days '64 - to 1978 deals with documents
government official reports, glossy photos, press release
data, etc.,

I will deeply appreciate any new items your office
can grant my educational project, photocopies of
hearing texts, glossy photos, government reports, etc.
dating from 1963 - 1964, that now can be added to
the public in 1978. I would appreciate very much
any selection of new materials you can grant from
the 1978 Assassination Hearings, since passed members
of your office have given information. Even a complete
copy of the text given by the passed C.I.A. chief will
give great interest to my educational project.

Perhaps, on my behalf you will be so very kind
and thoughtful to ask the Director of the new '78
Assassination Hearings, to send my collection any
data, photocopies of documents, press release texts, glossy
photos, etc.

photographic prints of old or new exhibits, that can now be released, etc.

My efforts are for education, and many, many hours and years have gone into my efforts to obtain official memorabilia both dealing with every President since late President Hoover to Pres. Jimmy Carter. And my largest section deals with the Kennedy family and the assassinations of Pres. Kennedy, and Sen Robert Kennedy.

Any items, photocopies of outdated documents, etc. will be displayed with official material I have dealing with the Warren Report of 1964. Any thoughtful help will help "tie-in" my Warren Report items, with my items received on the new 1978 Assassination Hearings.

My project, has been seen on area T.V. two different times, and write-ups have been done 5 different times in our area newspapers. Of recent date my educational exhibit was displayed at our new Public Library, it was to run for 4 weeks, but was held over for four more weeks by request. Some 1,000 persons a week saw the display there. I so hope you will feel my efforts worthy of sending a small selection of outdated items. C. I. A. Reports, etc. dealing with the above subject, and granting my request to ask the '78 Assassination Committee direct to send whatever material they can, to me, for the project.

With very deep appreciation and best wishes,

Sincerely,
Donald Blackwell.

College Library Holds

Approved For Release 2004/10/28 : CIA-RDP81M00980R000300040033-9

Great Kennedy Section

After 27 years of spreading knowledge into every nook of the old Bass mansion, Sister Mary Ida, librarian of Saint Francis College, must leave it all soon for a new career.

Her tenure on one of the most picturesque campuses

in the country has presented the need for an even larger library structure. But it will be hard to match what has been done to provide an interesting and restful environment for study.

When Sister Ida came here with the college staff in 1944 from Lafayette the institution's library was confined to one room of the manse. Since then it has expanded in an orderly and unique way through all 36 rooms of the building — three floors and sub basement. Most recently it invaded what used to be the college conservatory of music on the top floor — a great domed chamber that formerly ballroom.

Referred to almost reverently as "the upper room" by a cleaning lady, this vaulted place has been converted into a seventh-heaven of study and directly below it is one of the nation's great collections of Kennedy lore. There has been no serious effort to evaluate it but Sister Ida said it might be called "fabulous."

This has been her special pride since the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and the coverage includes even a sample of the champagne stiller velvet that lined the presidential casket. It discloses, too, the little known fact that there were two caskets.

It is a combined library of everything that has been printed about the Kennedy family and a collection of artifacts that has been made available through the remarkable research of a Fort Wayne man—Donald B. Blackwell.

a Paris newspaper reporting the Kennedy assassination.

"We even have a duplicate of the radio bullet that struck the president," Sister Ida confided. "We made sure that it was not dangerous . . ." There is a sample, too, of the Vermont marble used in the Kennedy memorial along with a pictorial record of engraver John Hagenauer of New York, N.Y. at work on the lettering.

Well indoctrinated as they are in the techniques of library management, the library staff is mystified by the thoroughness of the Blackwell research and its fruits within such a short period of years. Some of his approaches for material were tasteful and directly to the principals involved while others were routed through devious channels — all with effective returns.

A Washington mortuary supplied the names of three technicians who appraised the cosmetics to the president's body but declined to send along their autographs. John Van Hoosen, Edward Strobel and Thomas Robinson worked three

hours to prepare the executive's body for viewing.

President Kennedy's body was moved from Dallas to Washington in a bronze casket — somehow it was damaged in shipment and was replaced by a Marsellus mahogany coffin. The disposition of the damaged casket was described as "classified information."

Just from a piece.

There is an autograph in the collection from the Very Rev. Oscar L. Huber C.M., who gave the last rites to the dying president, along with a copy of his remarks on events of the day.

One may view a picture of the trauma room of Fairbank Memorial Hospital in Dallas where surgeons worked tirelessly over the dying president. There are copies of the true bills issued against Lee Harvey Oswald and Jack (Rubenstein) Ruby.

Donated Staff

The Blackwell collection also identifies the natives who gave refuge to Jack and the men of his command in the Saigon Islands after the PT boat was sunk by enemy fire. Records, too, is a visit of Oswald's mother to the Southwestern Historical Museum in Dallas to view a figure of her son. The sculptor, she commented, had captured the peculiar set of her son's lips.

The main screen of the Kennedy tomb, 13 feet long, eight and a half feet high and three feet thick, was one of the largest ever quarried. It came from the Imperial Danby quarry which also supplied the stone for the Jefferson Memorial.

There is a famous Kershaw photo of the late president among innumerable others that was autographed by Jacqueline Kennedy. All of the Kennedy signatures in the collection have been verified — a few very close to the president were authorized to sign for him.

When catalogued, the collection may surpass in detail the famed Warren report.

The library so carefully gathered by Sister Ida provides a microscopic view of the Kennedys as a family in poll-long ed

Blackwell Makes A Fabulous Gift

Blackwell's is perhaps the most profound single contribution to the library which has been endowed from abroad by friends of Sister Ida and members of the library staff and others who chose Saint Francis as a worthy depository for materials pertaining to the Kennedys.

By reason of his contribution, Mr. Blackwell has become an official researcher for the college's Kennedy Library.

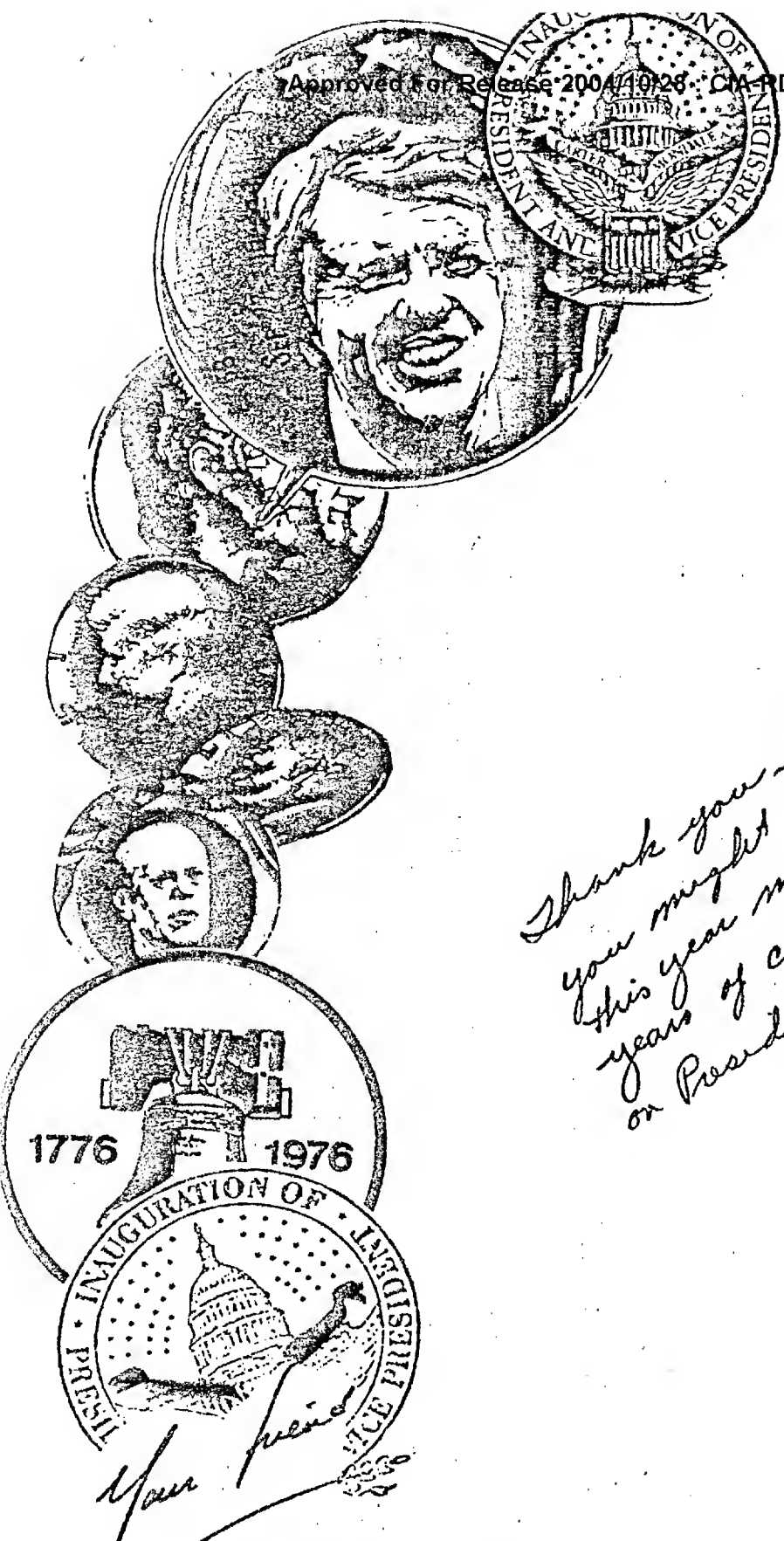
Whatever one needs to know about the late president may be found there and as in Arlington Cemetery, a lamp glows day and night on the second floor to mark this treasure of massive research.

It is a part of the college's working library and students make use of it often. The newspaper clippings have been microfilmed for permanency and the artifacts made available by Blackwell are being catalogued as time permits. There are 20 or more volumes of Blackwell's work to come.

Friends of Sister Ida provided a special edition of the Irish News published after the president's memorable visit to "Irish cousins" and a copy of

Please Return

Donald B. Blackwell

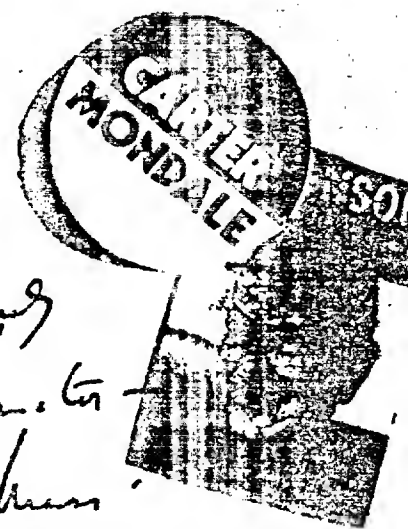


*Thank you for any help granted,
you might note
this year marks 20
years of collecting official items
on President and Sen. Kennedy, etc.
Many Thanks
Don*

Your friend

Jimmy Carter
Lains, Georgia 31740

John Kennedy
U.S. Senator
Mass



COLLECTOR OF PRESIDENTIAL MEMORABILIA 1958-1978
PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT THRU PRESIDENT CARTER

John Kennedy, U. S. Senator, Mass
United States Senate

STAT

IND

SENDER WILL CHECK CLASSIFICATION TOP AND BOTTOM			
UNCLASSIFIED	CONFIDENTIAL	SECRET	
OFFICIAL ROUTING SLIP			
TO	NAME AND ADDRESS	DATE	INITIALS
1	Mr. Scott Breckinridge		
2	EW-1 Amber via GX-2		
3			
4			
5			
6			
<input type="checkbox"/>	ACTION	<input type="checkbox"/>	DIRECT REPLY
<input type="checkbox"/>	APPROVAL	<input type="checkbox"/>	DISPATCH
<input type="checkbox"/>	COMMENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	FILE
<input type="checkbox"/>	CONCURRENCE	<input type="checkbox"/>	INFORMATION
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	PREPARE REPLY
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	RECOMMENDATION
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	RETURN
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	SIGNATURE
Remarks: Is there any information we can give to Mr. Blackwell?			
FOLD HERE TO RETURN TO SENDER			
FROM: NAME, ADDRESS AND PHONE NO.			DATE
			9/27/78
UNCLASSIFIED	CONFIDENTIAL	SECRET	